653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 787 782 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 782 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

366 Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
651 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is successful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
[601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gouroumsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

366 Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
825 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
● 787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and
727 Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large num-
648 ber of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has al-
[439] ways had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries.

567 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the em-
648 peror of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there
651 were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his
302 head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he
787 was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

The Kourita

(43) As we have just seen, the child who is made kourita is exiled and is no longer regarded as a member of the family. He is himself the Naba, and he must never see the new emperor. His brothers may visit him, and he may visit them.

1. The kourita is washed with the remainder of the water that was used to wash the body of the deceased king.

2. He is carried through the same opening (vonré) as was used to carry out the body of the dead naba.

3. He is given the woman with whom the chief last had sexual relations before he was stricken by illness.

4. He is also given the horse which the deceased king rode every Friday.

[127] He is dressed in the last garments worn by the deceased. He is given one or two servitors and as many grooms and is then sent to the Kilwin Naba (chief of a hamlet near Bissiga, three kilometers from Ouagadougou), who is required to give him hospitality for about a month.

In the old days, the power of a kourita was almost unlimited. Indeed, during his stay at Kilwin, he had the right to pillage, to ruin everything, and to live like a true potentate. Naturally he always had plenty of willing helpers to aid him in plundering the property of the unfortunate Mossi. The kourita traveled about through many cantons where the kombemba (plural of kombéré) paid him all the honors due the Mogho Naba. It was during these wanderings that he finally chose a permanent residence.

•[187] The new Mogho Naba is obliged to satisfy all the desires of the kourita to avoid being visited by him, an omen of disaster. Indeed, the Mossi believe that if the kourita should visit the new Mogho Naba, the latter would die.

The Enthronement -- Before and After

As we have already seen, once the burial is completed, one walks around the house of the deceased king. Then, the following persons are summoned to Ouagadougou:

1. Loumbila Naba.

584 visits and presents a few small gifts. This state of affairs goes on for one or several years. Finally the head of the family calls together his little council and makes known his intention of giving So-and-So's daughter to X... from such-and-such village. There is seldom a refusal since he has sole authority to give the girls in marriage. The young man is then sent to make the acquaintance of his prospective in-laws. As soon as he is presented, he makes a small gift (usually [175] 100 to 1,000 cowries are given).

If the girl is the oldest daughter, her fiancé is expected to bring a sheep, a hoe, a guinea hen, and some beer.

585 The young man is then told the date on which he may send for his fiancée. He has nothing further to do, except to make some preparations and to wait. When the girl is brought to him, he kills some chickens and a goat if he has one, and he has food prepared for the girl's escort. He must also give cowries to them, the amount depending on his own resources.

In many villages the girls married in this way never leave their husbands for fear of being cursed by their parents and condemned never to see their native villages again.

574 851 Finally, if the wife gives birth, the husband sends a chicken to the village elder and the wife goes there to visit.

● 787 584 Girls who are hostile to a husband. These are girls whom the soothsayers point out as hostile to a husband.

Although these girls are promised at an early age, just like other girls, they must not know that they are engaged, and if their fiancés should by chance come to visit, they are treated like ordinary guests who have just happened by.

583 When such a girl reaches seventeen, her fiancé arranges with her family to send her to the waterhole, the well, or the nearest market.

[176] The fiancé selects a group of his strongest friends, plies them with beer, and sends them off with instructions to abduct his fiancée on the way. The latter, accompanied by a woman or by other girls, is surrounded unexpectedly and seized by strong arms despite the resistance, often quite vigorous, of her brothers or her companions. She is then taken to the home of her husband.

A few days later some people are designated to take the girl's effects to her husband's home and to receive the traditional gifts.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to consult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices to avoid a miscarriage.

[781 782]

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery. [842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are [304] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

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554
[187]

The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

Chapter-13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 ● 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 787 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me n an baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 782 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba), and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 476 [252] [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

685 entitled to complain and merely removed the animal. If the damage was caused by a cow or donkey, the owner of the field had to obtain a witness and was entitled to recover damages.

425 Whoever found an object of small value, such as a knife or even a garment, was entitled to keep it, but anything valuable, such as a sheep, a donkey, or, all the more, a cow, had to be handed over to the naba and became his property.

684 837 The province chief alone could pass sentence on a rapist. He was beaten and put in irons, the girl was returned to her family, and, if she gave birth, the child was killed. If the girl had been promised to the naba, the rapist was put to death. An adulterer caught in flagrante delicto could be killed by the deceived husband, but if he had not been caught in flagrante delicto, if he had managed to run away, or if he had merely been denounced by the woman, the deceived husband could do nothing. A girl's seducer usually became her husband if she gave birth, but he had to provide another girl for her betrothed.

791 787 837 The province chief had a special procedure to insure the faithfulness of his numerous wives and his pages. When a wife or page did not behave properly, the Poënaba was supposed to point them out to the naba. He proceeded as follows. Every Friday the Poënaba left his village on foot, a whip in his hand. A servant preceded him with a leather satchel containing charms. No one was allowed to come near him. Everyone fled into the bush, and the path he had followed was closed to other people until they learned that the dreadful man had reached the home of the naba. The wives were gathered together. The Poënaba filled a large gourd with water, poured in his ingredients, and sat before it. The women came to him one by one and cast their reflection in the water. The Poënaba looked in and claimed to recognize those wives who were faithful and those who were not. The former were allowed to go free, but they were often beaten to remove any possible inclination to unfaithfulness. Those designated as unfaithful were seized and had to denounce their accomplice. Both the man and woman were clubbed to death. If the woman pointed out as guilty had no accomplice or refused to name him, she alone was killed. Women still point out with terror the place of execution. This procedure was very barbarous, and its abuses were flagrant. To avoid an accusation which would cost them /27/ their lives, the poor women were ready to do anything, and they presented the Poënaba with all the gifts they could gather in order to be spared.

help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

764 be worn, others for carrying jars or to take to market. A woman is also offered a gourd to cook sauce, along with pepper, spices of all sorts, and salt. In addition, she is given the spindle that she used to spin cotton, but first its stem is broken; in fact, everything which is offered to the dead is previously damaged or torn. Wealthy friends also present clothes, and the others toss cowries to the dead. The undertakers carefully cover the smaller hole with blankets to prevent the cowries /71/ from falling into the pit. Every once in a while they allow a few to slide down, but they keep the greater part to themselves. When everyone has tossed in his offering, the undertakers take one, two, or several pieces of clothing; this is their share, and the practice is sanctioned by custom. They also take a few handfuls of cowries from the mourning apron, and someone hastens to count them. All eyes are anxiously focussed on the person who counts them, for either a man or a woman will die soon, depending on whether the number of cowries comes nearer to 333 or to 444.

[80] 787

Finally the undertakers close up the pit. If the deceased was an old woman, the smaller opening is plugged with one of the large jars in which she prepared millet beer; if a man, it is covered with a small jar or sometimes, especially if the opening is larger, with sticks laid as close together as possible. The corpse is thus completely isolated in its funeral chamber. The larger hole is then filled up with the soil removed from the pit. A jar and an earthen sauce pot are placed on top in the case of a woman, an earthen pot and a large stone in the case of a man.

Everyone withdraws to drink, eat, and rest. There is no dancing that night, but they make up for it on the following day and even on the day after that, if the wealth of the deceased permits it. On the second day after the funeral in the case of an old man, on the third day for an old woman, the children and younger brothers of the deceased shave their heads, go to thank those who have helped them, and remove their mourning clothes. There will be no further preoccupation with the deceased until the anniversary festivities or koure.

[184] Such are the ceremonies which usually attend the death and burial of a married man or woman, those who have children. We say "usually," for all these complex ceremonies may be curtailed and modified to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the region and the customs peculiar to one family or another.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the
787 sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

find the leopard, which had suddenly vanished. The puzzled elders, like the good Mossi they were, consulted the sorcerer who stated that the leopard was their tangandé, and the thicket to which it had repaired was its sacred grove. He also prescribed the sacrifices to be offered.

As the blood of the victims flowed, the children saw a turtle walking toward the sacred grove and tried to seize it. The elder prevented then from doing so and again resorted to the superior knowledge of the sorcerer to find out what this might possibly mean: a turtle entering the sacred grove during a sacrifice to the tangandé! The sorcerer pronounced the following oracle: the turtle is the child of the tangandé and thus becomes sacred to our village. Since that time the village has had the leopard and turtle as its tangandé /sic/.

The tangandé may actually be a stone or a tree which is regarded as the guardian of the village, but this is more unusual. The tangandé might perhaps be considered as a sort of village totem. If we take Salomon Reinach's definition of the totem as "the animal, plant, or more rarely mineral or heavenly body which the clan acknowledges as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying sign," (3) we find that the

3. Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religion /Cults, Myths, and Religion/, p. 81.

tangandé is usually an animal, a guardian animal, but that it is not regarded as an ancestor and it does not serve as a rallying sign, for several villages may have the same tangamma /sic/—many have the crocodile and boa—without considering this as a bond between them.

Monseigneur Le Roy defines totemism as follows: "An institution consisting essentially of a magic pact, which reflects and constitutes a kinship, mystical and supernatural in nature, by which an invisible spirit in the visible shape of an animal, or, in exceptional cases, of a plant, mineral, or astral body, is associated with an individual, a family, a clan, a tribe, or a secret society for the purpose of reciprocal services." (4) This definition does not correspond to the

4. Mgr. Le Roy, La religion des primitifs /Primitive Religion/, p. 132.

spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

777 may hold in store. Wednesday is unreservedly bad, and you must not start a job or leave for a trip on that day. Thursday and Friday are propitious to weddings, especially Friday. On Saturday the sorcerers take the day off and hold no consultations. In addition, every individual has his own lucky day and his unlucky day, which he must know and bear in mind.

778 Some stones are said to have fallen from heaven. On the day when
● 787 they fall, the village chief immediately covers all the jars in his hut
923 which contain charms. If he knocks one down in his haste, he will die within the year. These stones are held sacred. Those who can lift them /100/ have nothing to fear, but those who cannot are soon to die. People may also interrogate such a stone, whose reply is considered favorable if they manage to lift it, unfavorable if they cannot
[788] do so. Passersby toss millet stalks onto the stone, or twigs cut along the way, or sometimes cowries, to procure success in their endeavors.

821 Comets are omens of war or of the death of a great chief. When
787 Halley's comet appeared on the horizon, the chickens, goats, and sheep had a bad time of it. It was necessary to ward off all the possible misfortunes. It is true that the comet was magnificent, spreading for several days from one end of the sky nearly to another, and it is understandable that the natives should be upset. We have heard that many people were troubled in our civilized countries, where the comet could not be seen in all its splendor. In spite of all those sacrifices, the chief of one of the principal cantons in the province, the naba of Ouidiaga, died that very year.

800 We must limit our enumeration, and these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, suffice to make clear the role of amulets and superstitions in the life of this people.

801 One further word on superstitions. The reader may have noticed that the numbers three and four and their composites have recurred constantly according to the sex of the person spoken of. Three is reserved for men and four for women. In the sacrifices, God-king male is called three times. God-king female four times. The cord of the charm has three or four knots according to sex; mothers mourn their children for 33 or 44 days. A dead man receives 333 or 3, 333 cowries, a dead woman 444 or 4, 444, etc.

302 Every time a native changes his status, his hair must be removed. Babies are shaved before they are given a name, girls before they come to their husband, women when they are transferred to a new

644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soronê (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soronê. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soronê, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soronê and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 838 The soronê wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soronê.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soronê. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soronê are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 781 soronê is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soronê, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soronê reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soronê and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs. First, the funeral ceremonies.

When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

000 nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

782 The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular,
776 kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit
[824] in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

791 Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara dis-
[787] close things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

791 The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make
789 a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the
787 baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit
755 (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a
[431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and
576 knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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622 797 582

he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems.

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The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away.

[562] [593] [586]

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Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral.

[787] [551] [164]

797 167

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou-

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Sonni-Ali entered Kabara in the year 882 after the Hegira (1477); and it was during the course of the same year that the king of the Mossi entered Sama. In 884 (1479) Sonni-Ali was at Tosoko. . . .

During the month of Jumada I of that year (July 9 to August 8, 1480), the king of the Mossi entered Biro [the Songhai name for Walata] and did not leave until Jumada II (August 8 to September 7, 1480). The siege lasted one month, and during that time he demanded a woman from the inhabitants. . . . After the siege the Mossi king gave battle to the inhabitants of Biro, vanquished them, and took them and their families into captivity. But, as he was returning to his country with his booty, the inhabitants of Biro followed and fought him, and freed their families. Omar-ben-Mohammed-Nadi, who was at Biro at this time, distinguished himself by his valor and ardor during the battle; for he was the first warrior to attack the Mossi king and thus force him to give up the families which had been captured.[2]

A few years later, the Mossi again invaded the area, this time making war on Sonni-Ali himself. The chronicler writes:

Then the prince Sonni-Ali undertook the task of digging a canal leading from Ras-el-Ma to Biro. He was devoting all his effort and a great deal of energy to this task when word reached him that the king of the Mossi had decided to make war on him, and was then leading the attack at the head of his troops. Sonni-Ali was at a place called Chan-Fenech when he heard this news, and he stopped work on the canal right there. God spared the inhabitants of Biro the misfortune which threatened them; for Sonni-Ali, going out to meet the king of the Mossi, made contact with him at a place called Djiniki-To'oi, situated near the town of Kobi behind the river. The battle took place there, and the victorious Sonni-Ali put the Mossi king to flight, and pursued him into his own country. That battle took place in the year 888 (1483).[3]

This battle seems to have represented the high point in the northern expansion of the Mossi, because the next reference to them in the *Tarikh es-Sudan* tells of Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed's holy war against them. This man, who had usurped the throne from Sonni-Ali's heir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned he decided to convert the pagan masses of the Sudan to Islam:

During the year 903 (August 1497 to August 1498), he undertook an expedition against Na'asira, the king of the Mossi. He took with him the mallam, Mour-Salih-Djaaura, inviting him to give the necessary indications so that the expedition would be a veritable holy war made in the name of God. Mour did not refuse this request, and explained to the prince all the rules relative to the holy war. The prince of the faithful, Askia-Mohammed, then asked the mallam to be his envoy to the Mossi king. The learned holy man accepted this mission; he went to the country of the Mossi and delivered the letter of his master which called upon the king to embrace Islam. Before replying, the Mossi ruler declared that he wished first of all to consult his

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ancestors who were in the other world. Accompanied by his ministers, he went to the temple of the idol of the country. The learned holy man went there also, in order to see how one went about consulting the dead. They began by making the customary offerings; then a very old man appeared. At his appearance everyone prostrated himself and then the king announced the object of his visit. Calling upon the names of the ancestors, the old man said: "I will never agree to this step for you. On the contrary, you must fight until you or they die to the last man."

Then Na'asira replied to the mallam: "Return to your master and tell him that between us there will be only war and combat." Remaining alone in the temple with the personage who appeared in the form of an old man, the mallam questioned him in these words: "In the name of God Almighty I ask you to declare who you are." "I am Iblis [Satan]," replied the deceiving old man; "I have led them astray so that they will all die in a state of unbelief."

Mour returned to prince Askia-El-Hadj-Mohammed and reported all which had come to pass. "Now," he added, "your duty is to fight them." Straightway he launched his war against them, killed a number of their men, devastated their fields, plundered their habitations, and took their children into captivity. All of the men and women who were taken away as captives were made the object of divine benediction [converted to Islam]. In the entire country, no other expedition outside of this one had the character of a holy war made in the name of God.[4]

The rulers of the Songhai appear to have kept up their attacks on the Mossi during the following hundred years. One of them, Askia Daoud, launched an expedition against the Mossi in 1549 to celebrate his accession to the throne. He attacked and defeated them again in 1561 while on his way to attack Bornou, and their ruler "abandoned the country with all his troops."[5] After this and several other crushing defeats, the Mossi refrained from attacking Songhai territory. Their ardor for external adventures apparently cooled after this period, and there are no reports of their fighting anyone else except the Bambara of Segou in the eighteenth century.[6] Of course, Mossi chiefs made local forays among smaller neighboring groups such as the Busansi, Gurunsi, and Samogo, but only to catch slaves.

During the nineteenth century—a rather chaotic period in the western Sudan—the Mossi appear to have been immune from outside attacks. Crozat, who visited them in 1890, states: "From the very first, in Mossi country, one feels that one has entered a new land, more peaceful, richer, and more populous [than other African countries he had visited]. . . . The people one meets on the roads are workers on their way to the fields, or are carrying wares to the neighboring market. They are not like the Songhai and the Bobo, who always carry bows on their shoulders."[7] The immunity of the Mossi from attack by such intrepid nineteenth-century

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soba (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropriate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *tengsoba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place. Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence ... is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1964 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 53).